THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRi RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) A statement showing the month-wise percentage variation in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) of Pulses, Edible Oils, and other important sale-groups of essentia] commodities such as cereals, vegetables, sugar, *khandsari* and *Gur* from November, 1989 to November, 1990 is given in Annexure *[See* Appendix CLVI, Annexure No. 4].

(b) The Government has accorded highest priority to check the rising trend in prices of essential commodities. Both long term and short term measures are, therefore, being taken for the purpose. The measures taken broadly include steps to increase pro-duct'on of essential commodities, procurement and buffer stocking operations of foodgrains. strengthening Of Public Distribution System, enforcement of the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and other regulatory measures, and augmenting domestic supplies through imports wherever necessary so as to check any abnormal rise in the prices of essential commodities.

The various measures taken by the Government have resulted in checking run-away increase in prices of most of the essential commodities and softening i_n prices of items like rice, gram. *arhar,* potatoes, sugar; *gur vanaspati* and tea etc. in recent weeks.

Closure of Indian Tourist Offices *27.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHAND-RAKANT BH AND ARE:

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have re-considered their decision to close down the Indian Tourist Offices abroad in view of the need and Potential for promoting tourism; and

(b) if so, the decision taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI USHA SINHA): (a) and (b) A decision was taken to close the Tourist Offices at Chicago, Singapore, Stockholm and Sydney. This matter was reconsidered and it was decided to continue the Office at Sydney.

उत्तर प्रदेश में बंजर भूमि

*28. **श्री राम नरेश यादव** : क्या कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) उत्तर प्रदेश में कितनी बंजर भूमि है और क्या इसे कृषि योग्य बनाने की कोई योजना सरकार के पास लम्बित है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है और यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं ?

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा कृषि और पर्यटन मंत्री (श्री देवी लाल) : (क) देश भर में परती भूमि का राज्यवार सर्वेक्षण नहीं किया गया है। लेकिन, अनुमानों के अनुसार उत्तर प्रदेश में परती भूमि का कुल 80.61 लाख हैक्टैयर क्षेत्र उपलब्ध है। जिसमें 14.26 लाख हैक्टैयर खराब वनभूमि शामिल है।

(ख) सरकार निम्नलिखित तीन योजनाओं पर विचार कर रही है, जो कार्य दल द्वारा आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के निरूपण हेतु भूमि सुधार एवं विकास सहित भूमि एवं जल उपयोग पर आधारित नियोजन के लिए संस्तुत की गई है।

1. लवण वाली भूमि, समुद्र तटीय लवण वाली भूमि सहित, का सुधार।
2. अम्ल वाली मिट्टी का सुधार।
3. जल से भरे क्षेत्र का परिरक्षण और विकास।

Conversion of Rupsa-Bangriposi Railway Line

*29. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR' SAHU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have taken any decision for the conversion of the narrow-gauge rail line from Rupsa to Baripada and Bangriposi in South Eastern Railway in Orissa; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be completed?